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United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Soil  
Conservation  
Service

Reno  
Nevada



# Nevada Water Supply Outlook

January 1, 1987

CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

FEB 12 '87

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# Foreward

## How Forecasts Are Made

Most of the annual streamflow in the Western United States originates as snowfall. This snowfall accumulates high in the mountains during winter and early spring. As the snowpack accumulates, hydrologists estimate the runoff that will occur when it melts. Predictions are based on careful measurements of snow water equivalent at selected index points. Precipitation, temperature, soil moisture and antecedent streamflow data are viewed in conjunction with snowpack data to prepare runoff forecasts. This report presents a comprehensive picture of water supply outlook conditions for areas dependent upon surface runoff. It includes selected streamflow forecasts, summarized snowpack and precipitation data, reservoir storage data and narratives describing current conditions.

Streamflow forecasts are cooperatively generated by Soil Conservation Service and National Weather Service hydrologists. Forecasts become more accurate as more data affecting runoff becomes known. For this reason, forecasts are issued that reflect three future precipitation conditions — Below Normal, Average, and Above Normal. These forecasts are termed reasonable minimum, most probable, and reasonable maximum. Actual streamflow can be expected to fall between the lower and upper forecast values eight out of ten years.

Snowpack data are obtained by using a combination of manual and automated measurement methods. Manual readings of snow depth and water equivalent are taken at locations called snow courses on a monthly or semi-monthly schedule during the winter. In addition, snow water equivalent, precipitation, temperature, and other parameters are monitored on a daily basis and transmitted via radio telemetry to central data collection facilities. Both monthly and daily data are used to project snowmelt runoff.

## For More Information

Copies of Monthly Water Supply Outlook Reports and other reports may be obtained from the states listed below. Because of the limited space, snow survey measurements are not published in monthly reports. An annual snow survey data summary is published by the Soil Conservation Service for each of the western states. Historical snow survey data may be obtained at those same offices.

STATE	ADDRESS
Alaska	201 East 9th Ave., Suite 300, Anchorage, AK 99501-3687
Arizona	201 East Indianola, Suite 200, Phoenix, AZ 85012
Colorado	2490 West 26th Ave., Denver, CO 80211
New Mexico	517 Gold Ave. S.W., Room 3301, Albuquerque, NM 97102
Idaho	304 North 8th Street, Room 345, Boise, ID 83702
Montana	10 East Babcock, Room 443, Federal Building, Bozeman, MT 59715
Nevada	1201 Terminal Way, Room 219, Reno, NV 89502
Oregon	1220 Southwest 3rd Ave., Room 1640, Portland, OR 97208
Utah	4402 Federal Building, 125 South State Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84147
Washington	360 U.S. Court House, Spokane, WA 99201
Wyoming	Federal Building, 100 East "B" Street, Casper, WY 82601

In addition to state reports, a Water Supply Outlook for the Western United States is published by the Soil Conservation Service and National Weather Service monthly, January through May. Reports may be obtained from the Soil Conservation Service, West National Technical Center, 511 Northwest Broadway, Room 547, Portland, OR 97209.

Published by other agencies:

Water Supply Outlook Reports prepared by other agencies include: California — Snow Survey Branch, California Department of Water Resources, P.O. Box 388, Sacramento, CA 95802; British Columbia — The Ministry of Environment, Water Investigations Branch, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, British Columbia, V8V 1X5; Yukon Territory — Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Northern Operations Branch, 200 Range Road, Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, Y1A 3V1; Alberta, Environment Technical Services Division, 9820 106th St., Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2J6.

# **Nevada Water Supply Outlook**

and

## **Federal - State - Private Cooperative Snow Surveys**

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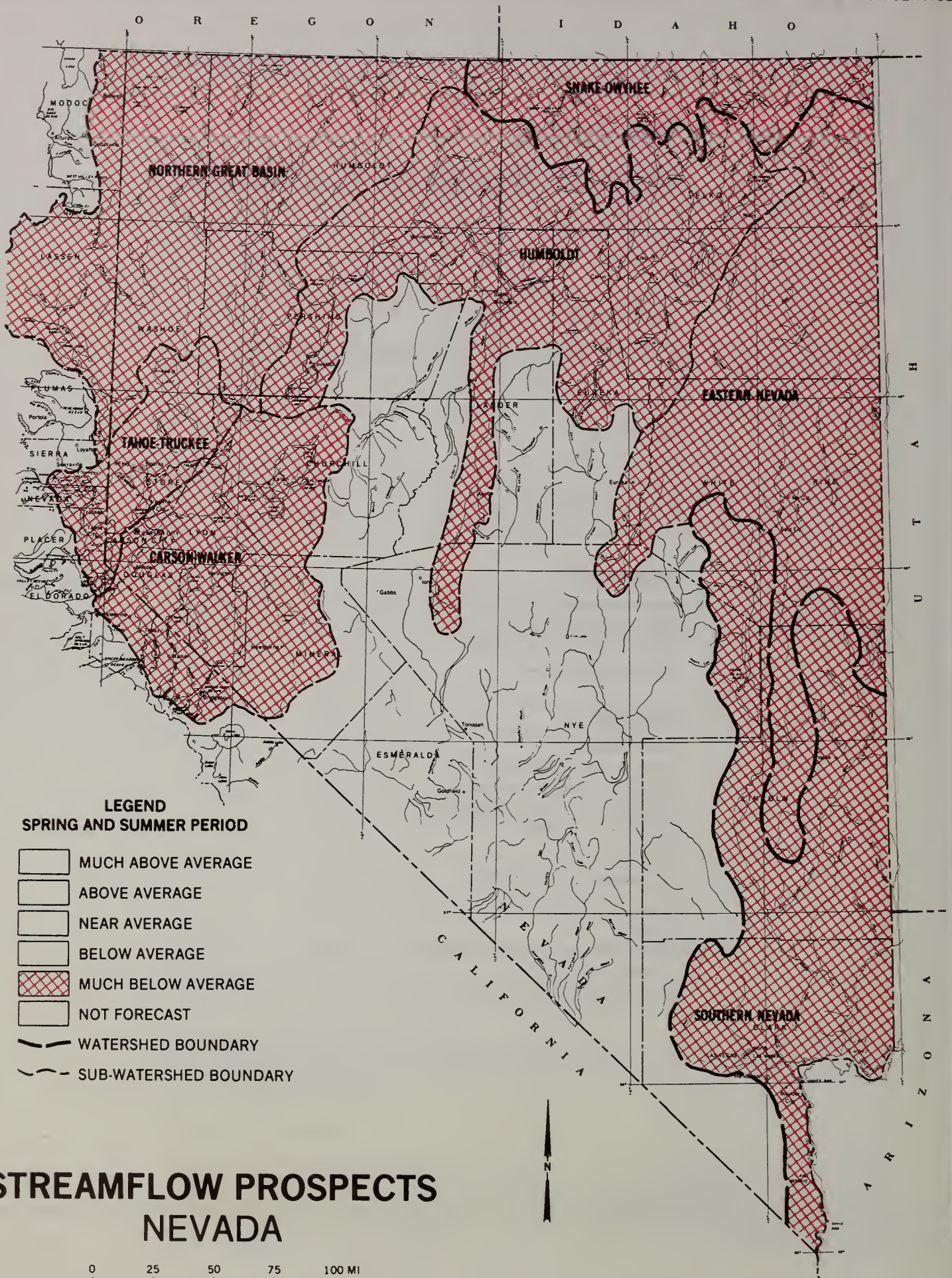
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## GENERAL OUTLOOK

### SUMMARY:

SNOWPACK ACCUMULATIONS FOR THE ENTIRE STATE ARE WELL BELOW AVERAGE. WATER YEAR PRECIPITATION FOR THE STATE IS WELL BELOW AVERAGE. RESERVOIR STORAGE IS EXCELLENT. STREAMFLOW VALUES RANGE FROM WELL BELOW AVERAGE TO AVERAGE.

### SNOWPACK:

Snowpack conditions are well below average state-wide as of January 1. The snowpack in the Tahoe-Truckee, Carson-Walker and the eastern portion of the Northern Great Basin are all below 20% of average. The Snake-Owyhee, Humboldt, Eastern Nevada, Southern Nevada and western portion of the Northern Great Basin are between 35% and 60% of average. The above figures do not reflect any snowfall occurring after January 1, 1987.

### PRECIPITATION:

December precipitation was below average throughout the state. The Tahoe-Truckee, Northern Great, Eastern Nevada, Humboldt, Snake-Owyhee and Carson-Walker basins were all below 35% of normal for the month. The Southern Nevada basin was about 75% of average for December. Water Year accumulations for the entire state are well below the average, with the Tahoe-Truckee and Carson-Walker basins both below 20% of normal.

### RESERVOIRS:

Water storage is above average for the state. Storage in the Tahoe-Truckee, Humboldt and Snake-Owyhee basins are well above average at 133%, 135% and 154%, respectively, of the January 1 average. Reservoir storage for the Carson-Walker basin is 100% of average. Total storage in the seven major lakes and reservoirs was 918,100 acre feet which is 24% over the average and 27% more than last year's storage at this time.

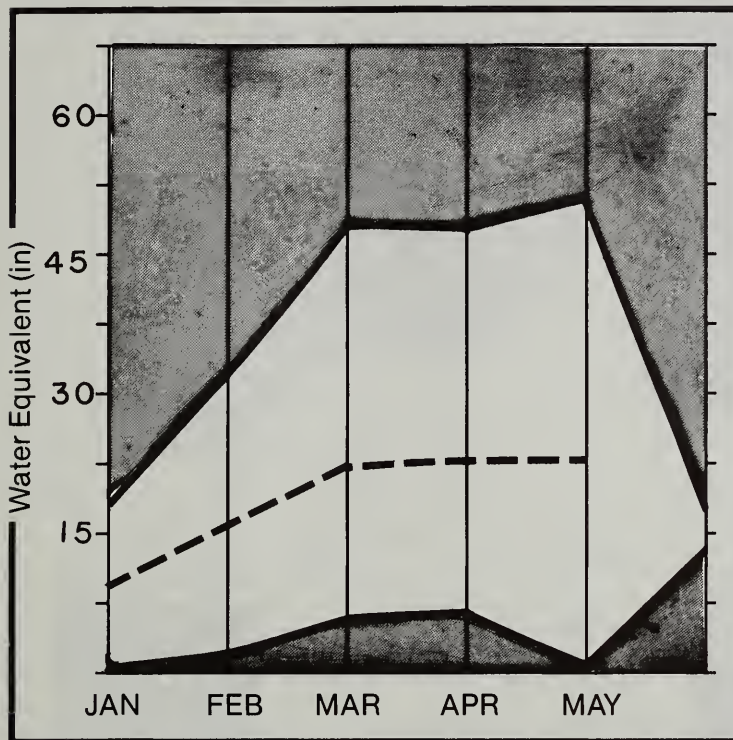
## STREAMFLOW:

Streamflow forecasts for most of the state are well below average. Tahoe-Truckee basin streamflows for April through July are estimated to be from 30-60% of average. Carson-Walker streamflows are projected at 45-65% of average. Northern Great Basin streamflows are expected to be between 50% and 80% of normal. Humboldt Basin streams are estimated to flow at 30-80% of normal. Snake-Owyhee streamflow values range from 45-55% of the 25-year average. Only Southern Nevada is expected to have average flows.



# CARSON & WALKER BASINS

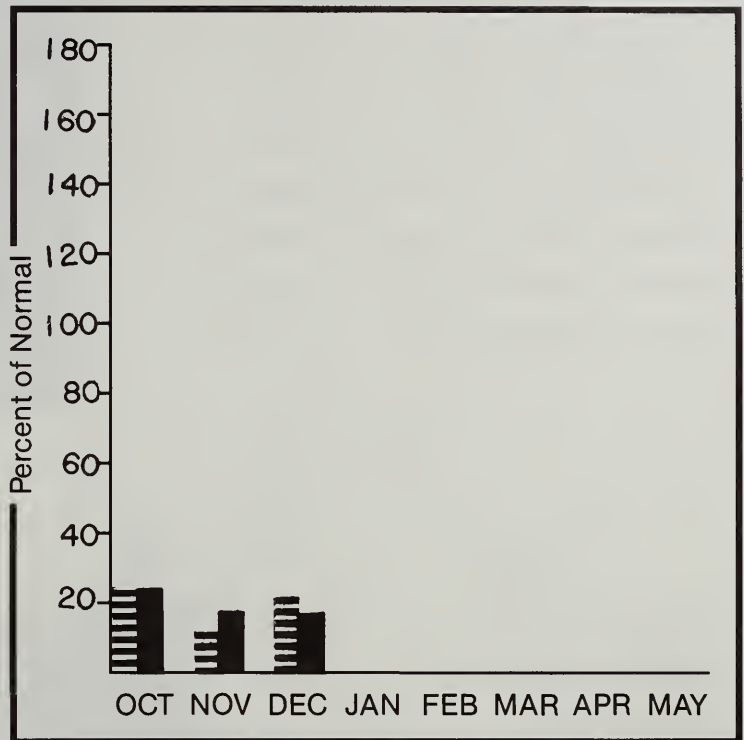
**Mountain snowpack\* (inches)**





\*Based on selected stations

Maximum  Average   
 Minimum  Current 

**Precipitation\* (percent of normal)**



\*Based on selected stations

Monthly precipitation  Year to date precipitation 

## WATER SUPPLY OUTLOOK:

Snow water content is well below normal. Snowpack accumulations were only about 15% of average on January 1. Storage at Bridgeport, Lahontan and Topaz reservoirs are higher than last year and higher than average. Precipitation recorded during December and accumulations since October 1 are well below normal at 21% and 16%, respectively. Streamflow forecasts for the Carson and Walker drainages are about 60% of the 1961-85 averages.

For more information contact your local Soil Conservation Service office.

# CARSON & WALKER BASINS

## STREAMFLOW FORECASTS

FORECAST POINT	FORECAST PERIOD	25 YR. AVG. (1000AF)	MOST PROBABLE (1000AF)	MOST PROBABLE (% AVG.)	REAS. MAX. (1000AF)	REAS. MAX. (% AVG.)	REAS. MIN. (1000AF)	REAS. MIN. (% AVG.)
EF CARSON RIVER nr Gardnerville, Nv	APR-JUL	198.4	130.0	66	203.0	102	57.0	29
WF CARSON RIVER at Woodfords, Ca	APR-JUL	58.7	35.0	42	55.0	97	15.0	26
CARSON RIVER near Carson City, Nv	APR-JUL	198.3	118.0	59	254.0	128	16.0	8
CARSON RIVER near Ft. Churchill, Nv	APR-JUL	182.4	100.0	55	251.0	138	12.0	7
EAST WALKER RIVER nr Bridgeport, Ca	APR-AUG	76.8	50.0	45	101.0	132	12.0	16
WEST WALKER RIVER near Coleville, Ca	APR-JUL	154.6	100.0	65	182.0	118	18.0	12
WALKER LAKE RISE (LOW 1/6/86)	LOW-HIG	-0.0	-0.3	45	1.0	90	-2.0	10

RESERVOIR STORAGE					(1000AF)	WATERSHED SNOWPACK ANALYSIS			
RESERVOIR	USEABLE CAPACITY	** USEABLE STORAGE **				WATERSHED	NO. COURSES AVG'D	THIS YEAR AS % OF LAST YR. AVERAGE	
		THIS YEAR	LAST YEAR	AVG.					
BRIDGEPORT RESERVOIR	42.5	29.1	18.7	24.0		E. CARSON RIVER	7	14	10
LAHONTAN RESERVOIR	295.1	169.4	145.5	170.4		W. CARSON RIVER	5	11	13
TOFAZ RESERVOIR	59.4	24.2	20.6	21.5		CARSON Rv. at Carson City	5	10	19
						CARSON Rv. at Ft. Churchill	5	10	19
						E. WALKER Rv. nr Bridgepo	5	13	14
						W. WALKER Rv. nr Colevill	7	11	12
						WALKER LAKE RISE	7	11	12

1 - Reas. max. and reas. min. forecasts are for 5% and 95% exceedance levels and also (2) below.

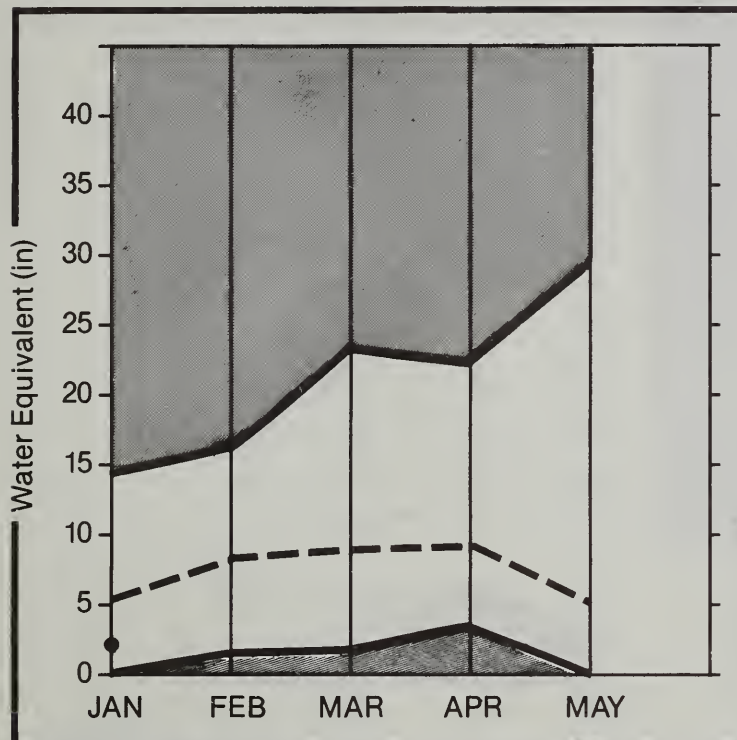
2 - Corrected for upstream diversions or changes in reservoir storage.

The average is computed for the 1961-85 base period.



# HUMBOLDT BASIN

**Mountain snowpack\*** (inches)

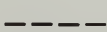


\*Based on selected stations

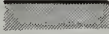
Maximum



Average



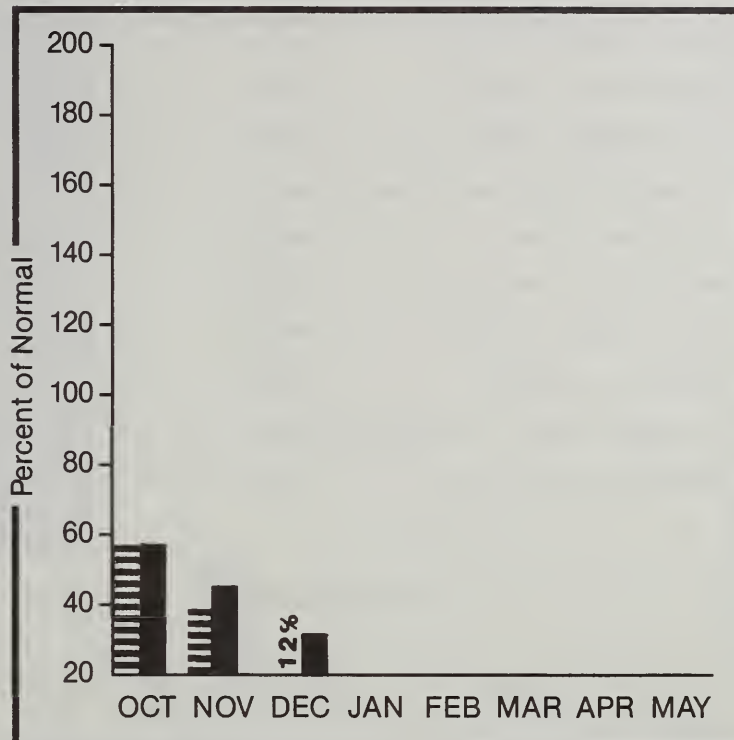
Minimum



Current



**Precipitation\*** (percent of normal)



\*Based on selected stations

Monthly precipitation



Year to date precipitation



## WATER SUPPLY OUTLOOK:

Snowpack values for January 1 are well below the 25-year averages. Water content is about 58% below average for this time. Precipitation for December was about 12% of average and water year accumulation was only 31% of average. Reservoir storage for Rye Patch Reservoir is excellent. Usable storage is 134% of average. Streamflows for the Humboldt Basin are forecast at 30-80% of average. The Humboldt River at Palisade, Nevada, streamflow forecast for April through July is 61% of average.

For more information contact your local Soil Conservation Service office.



# HUMBOLDT BASIN

## STREAMFLOW FORECASTS

FORECAST POINT	FORECAST PERIOD	25 YR. AVG. (1000AF)	MOST PROBABLE (1000AF)	MOST PROBABLE (% AVG.)	REAS. MAX. (1000AF)	REAS. MAX. (% AVG.)	REAS. MIN. (1000AF)	REAS. MIN. (% AVG.)
HUMBOLDT RIVER at Palisade	APR-JUL	269.0	165.0	61	415.0	154	20.0	7
HUMBOLDT RIVER at Comus	APR-JUL	229.1	121.0	53	403.0	176	27.0	12
S FORK HUMBOLDT RIVER at Dixie	APR-JUL	71.5	55.0	77	115.0	161	10.0	14
NF HUMBOLDT RIVER at Devils Gate	APR-JUL	34.3	21.0	61	55.0	160	4.0	12
MARY'S RIVER nr Deeth	APR-JUL	24.4	14.6	60	30.0	123	9.0	37
MARTIN CREEK nr Paradise Nv	APR-JUL	19.0	12.0	63	25.0	132	4.0	21
LAMOILLE CREEK nr Lamoille	APR-JUL	29.5	24.0	81	38.0	129	10.0	34
REESE RIVER nr Ione Nv	APR-JUL	7.8	4.0	51	11.0	141	1.0	13
L. HUMBOLDT RIVER nr Paradise Valley	APR-JUL	12.5	5.6	45	14.0	112	3.0	24
ROCK CREEK nr Battle Mtn.	APR-JUL	22.0	6.6	30	25.0	114	2.0	9

RESERVOIR STORAGE (1000AF)					WATERSHED SNOWPACK ANALYSIS		
RESERVOIR	USEABLE CAPACITY	USEABLE STORAGE THIS YEAR	USEABLE STORAGE LAST YEAR	USEABLE STORAGE AVG.	WATERSHED	NO. COURSES AVG'D	THIS YEAR AS % OF LAST YR. AVERAGE
RYE PATCH RESERVOIR	194.3	133.2	118.5	99.0	LAMOILLE CREEK	1	43 61
					S. FORK HUMBOLDT	4	25 44
					MARY'S RIVER	3	36 39
					N. FORK HUMBOLDT	3	11 19
					HUMBOLDT Rv. at Palisades	6	22 39
					HUMBOLDT RIVER at Comus	6	22 39
					LITTLE HUMBOLDT RIVER	1	22 66
					MARTIN CREEK	1	22 66
					REESE RIVER	1	0 0
					ROCK CREEK	2	19 47

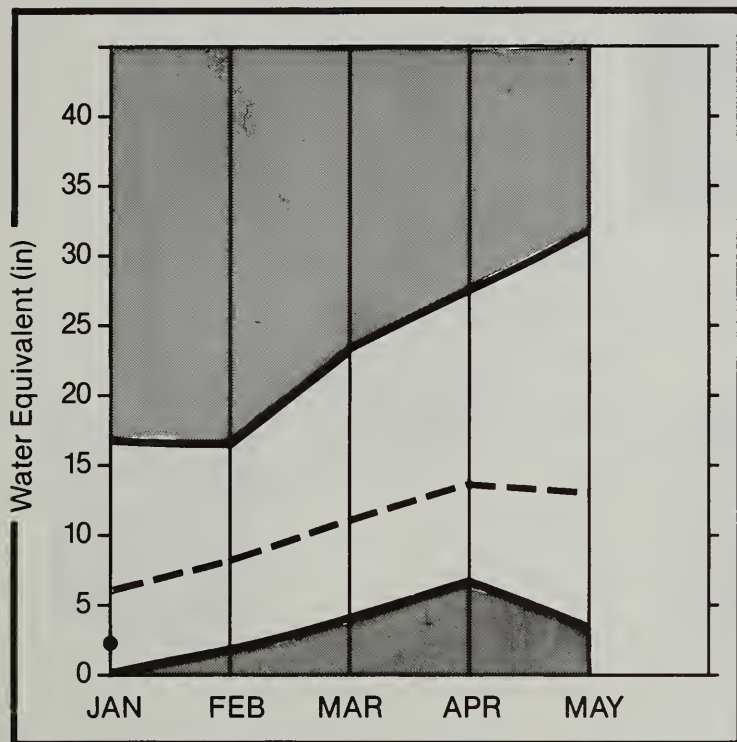
1 - Reas. max. and reas. min. forecasts are for 5% and 95% exceedance levels and also (2) below.

2 - Corrected for upstream diversions or changes in reservoir storage.

The average is computed for the 1961-85 base period.

# SNAKE & OWYHEE BASINS

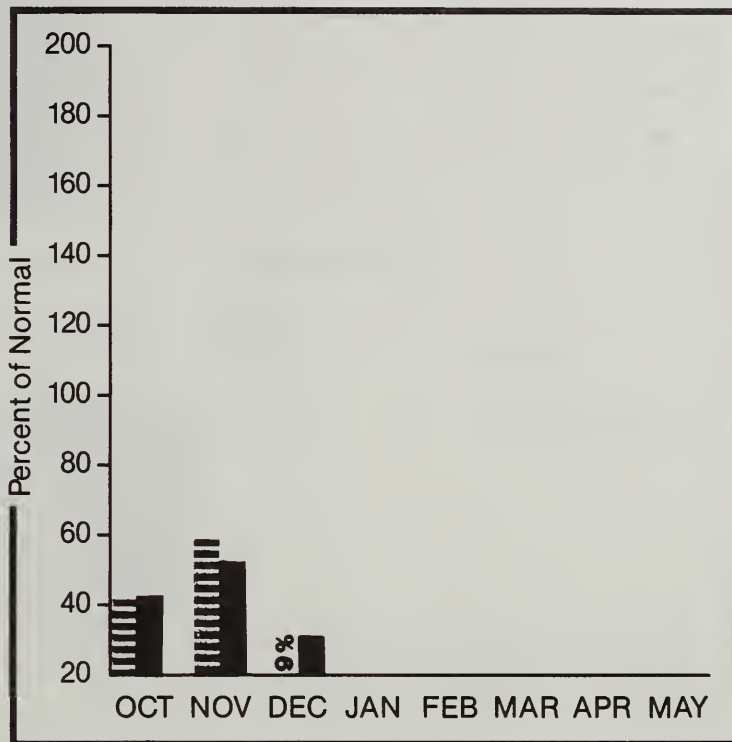
Mountain snowpack\* (inches)





\*Based on selected stations

Maximum  Average   
 Minimum  Current 

Precipitation\* (percent of normal)



\*Based on selected stations

Monthly precipitation  Year to date precipitation 

## WATER SUPPLY OUTLOOK:

Basin snowpack is well below normal at about 39% of average in the Snake portion of the basin and 47% of average in the Owyhee portion. Wildhorse Reservoir storage is excellent with 154% of average. December precipitation was only 9% of average and precipitation since October 1 was 36% of the 25-year average. The Owyhee River near Owyhee is expected to flow at 47% of average.

For more information contact your local Soil Conservation Service office.

# SNAKE & Owyhee Basins

## Streamflow Forecasts

Forecast Point	Forecast Period	25 Yr. Avg. (1000AF)	Most Probable (1000AF)	Most Probable (% Avg.)	Reas. Max. (1000AF)	Reas. Max. (% Avg.)	Reas. Min. (1000AF)	Reas. Min. (% Avg.)
Owyhee River nr Gold Creek	APR-JUL	22.0	13.7	62	37.0	122	2.0	7
Owyhee River nr Owyhee	APR-JUL	86.0	54.0	62	103.0	120	14.0	16
S Fork Owyhee nr White Rock, Nv	APR-JUL	83.0	45.0	54	106.0	128	10.0	12

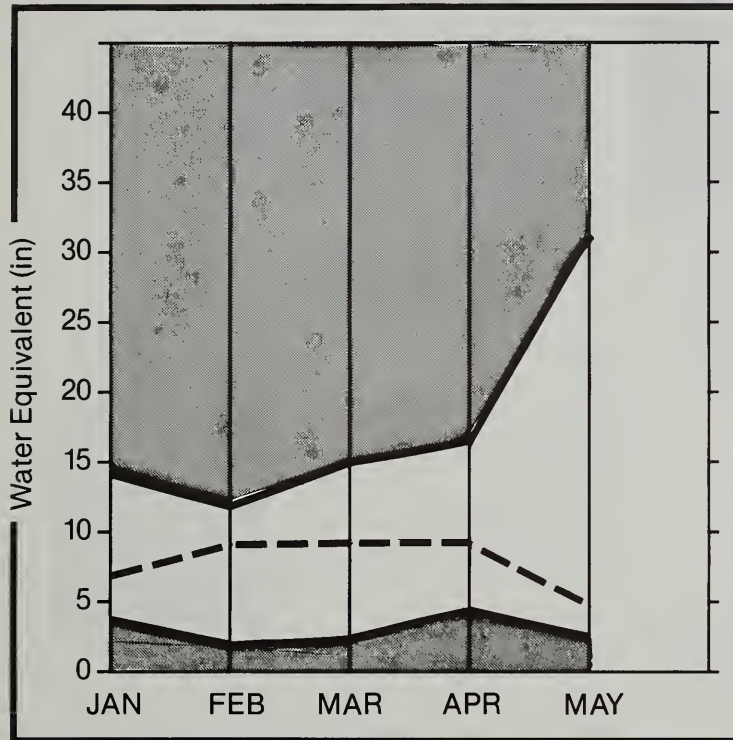
Reservoir Storage (1000AF)					Watershed Snowpack Analysis			
Reservoir	Useable Capacity	** Useable Storage **			Watershed	No. Courses Avg'd	This Year as % of	
		This Year	Last Year	Avg.			Last Yr.	Average
Wildhorse Reservoir	71.5	39.4	38.2	25.6	Owyhee River nr Owyhee	4	26	37
					Owyhee Rv. nr Gold Creek	1	16	23
					S. Fork Owyhee River	4	26	37
					Salmon Falls Creek	3	36	39

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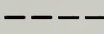



# EASTERN NEVADA

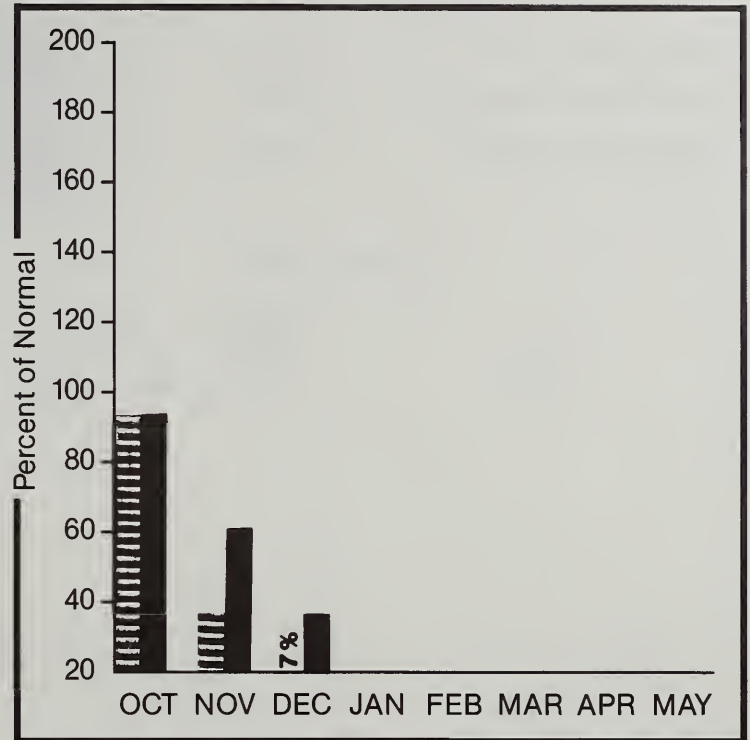
**Mountain snowpack\* (inches)**





\*Based on selected stations

Maximum  Average   
 Minimum  Current 

**Precipitation\* (percent of normal)**



\*Based on selected stations

Monthly precipitation  Year to date precipitation 

## WATER SUPPLY OUTLOOK:

Snow water content is well below average. Monthly precipitation for December was 7% of average for this time. Precipitation recorded since October 1 was 64% below average. Streamflow forecasts for Steptoe Creek and Franklin River are 62% and 73% of average, respectively.

For more information contact your local Soil Conservation Service office.

# EASTERN NEVADA

## STREAMFLOW FORECASTS

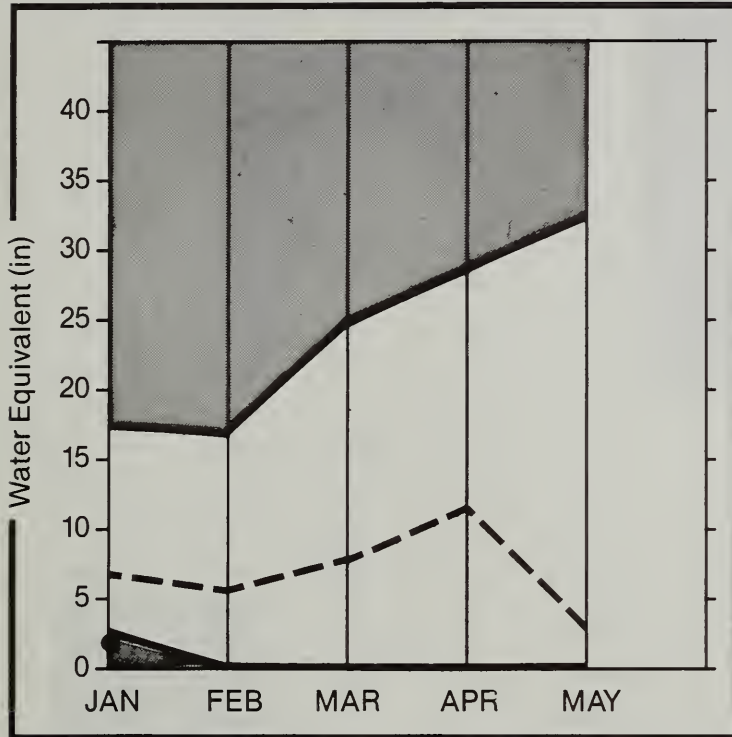
FORECAST POINT	FORECAST PERIOD	25 YR. AVG. (1000AF)	MOST PROBABLE (1000AF)	MOST PROBABLE (% AVG.)	REAS. MAX. (1000AF)	REAS. MAX. (% AVG.)	REAS. MIN. (1000AF)	REAS. MIN. (% AVG.)
STEPTOE CREEK nr Ely	APR-JUL	3.2	2.0	62	5.0	155	0.0	0
KINGSTON CREEK nr Austin, Nv	APR-JUL	4.2	2.4	57	6.0	142	0.0	0
FRANKLIN RIVER nr Arthur	APR-JUL	6.9	5.0	73	11.0	160	1.0	15

RESERVOIR STORAGE (1000AF)					WATERSHED SNOWPACK ANALYSIS		
RESERVOIR	USEABLE CAPACITY	USEABLE STORAGE THIS YEAR	USEABLE STORAGE LAST YEAR	USEABLE STORAGE AVERAGE	WATERSHED	NO. COURSES AVG'D	THIS YEAR AS % OF LAST YR. AVERAGE
					FRANKLIN RIVER	1	29 51
					KINGSTON CREEK	1	0 0
					EASTERN NEVADA	0	0 0
					STEPTOE VALLEY	0	0 0

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# NORTHERN GREAT BASIN

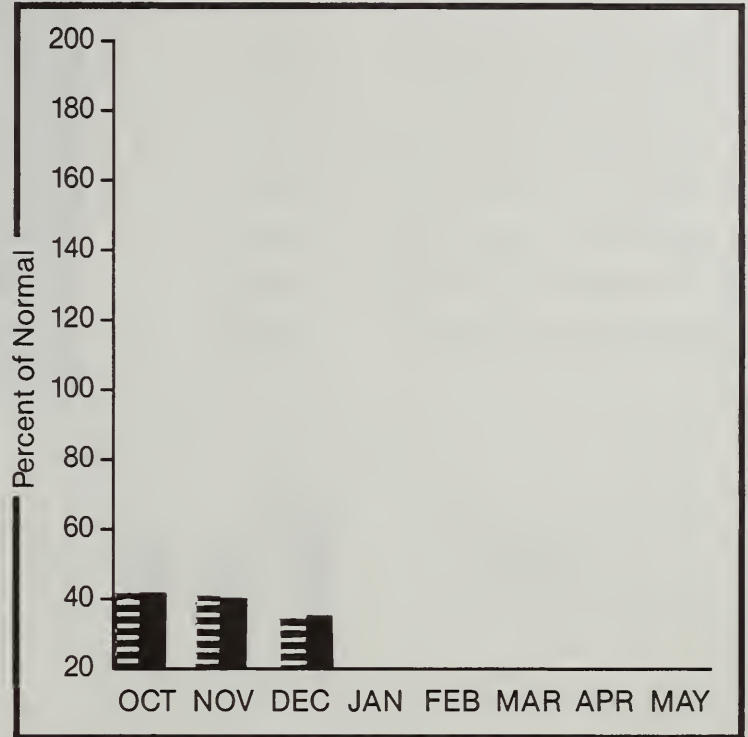
**Mountain snowpack\*** (inches)





\*Based on selected stations

Maximum  Average   
Minimum  Current 

**Precipitation\*** (percent of normal)



\*Based on selected stations

Monthly precipitation  Year to date precipitation 

## WATER SUPPLY OUTLOOK:

Snow water content along the western portion of the basin was 40% of average while the eastern portion was only 17% of average. Overall, snowpack accumulations for the entire basin were well below average for January 1. Precipitation in December and water year accumulation was about 35% of average. Streamflow for Bidwell Creek near Fort Bidwell is forecast at 6700 acre feet or 56% of average.

For more information contact your local Soil Conservation Service office.



# NORTHERN GREAT BASIN

## STREAMFLOW FORECASTS

FORECAST POINT	FORECAST PERIOD	25 YR. AVG. (1000AF)	MOST PROBABLE (1000AF)	MOST PROBABLE (% AVG.)	REAS. MAX. (1000AF)	REAS. MAX. (% AVG.)	REAS. MIN. (1000AF)	REAS. MIN. (% AVG.)
BIDWELL CREEK nr Fort Bidwell	APR-JUL	12.0	6.7	56	16.0	133	2.0	17
DEEP CREEK nr Cedarville, Ca	APR-JUL	3.6	2.1	58	5.0	139	1.0	28
EAGLE CREEK nr Eagleville, Ca	APR-JUL	4.3	3.0	70	6.0	140	1.0	23
MILL CREEK nr Cedarville, Ca	APR-JUL	4.1	2.7	66	6.0	146	1.0	24
QUINN RIVER nr McDermitt, Nv	APR-JUL	16.0	9.5	59	21.0	131	2.0	13
E. FORK QUINN RIVER nr McDermitt	APR-JUL	10.4	8.3	80	15.0	144	1.0	10
MCDERMITT CREEK nr McDermitt	APR-JUL	14.4	7.0	49	17.0	118	2.0	14

RESERVOIR STORAGE (1000AF)					WATERSHED SNOWPACK ANALYSIS		
RESERVOIR	USEABLE CAPACITY	USEABLE STORAGE THIS YEAR	USEABLE STORAGE LAST YEAR	USEABLE STORAGE AVG.	WATERSHED	NO. COURSES AVG'D	THIS YEAR AS % OF LAST YR. AVERAGE
					BIDWELL	1	86 60
					MILL CREEK	1	86 60
					DEEP CREEK	1	86 60
					EAGLE CREEK	1	86 60
					QUINN RIVER	1	16 17
					E. FORK QUINN	1	16 17
					MCDERMITT CREEK	1	16 17

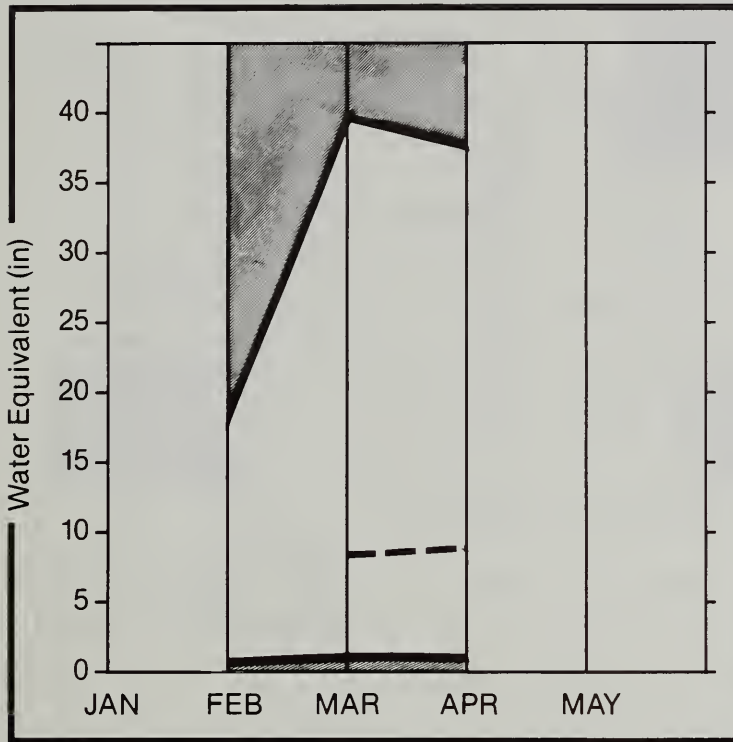
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2 - Corrected for upstream diversions or changes in reservoir storage.

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# SOUTHERN NEVADA

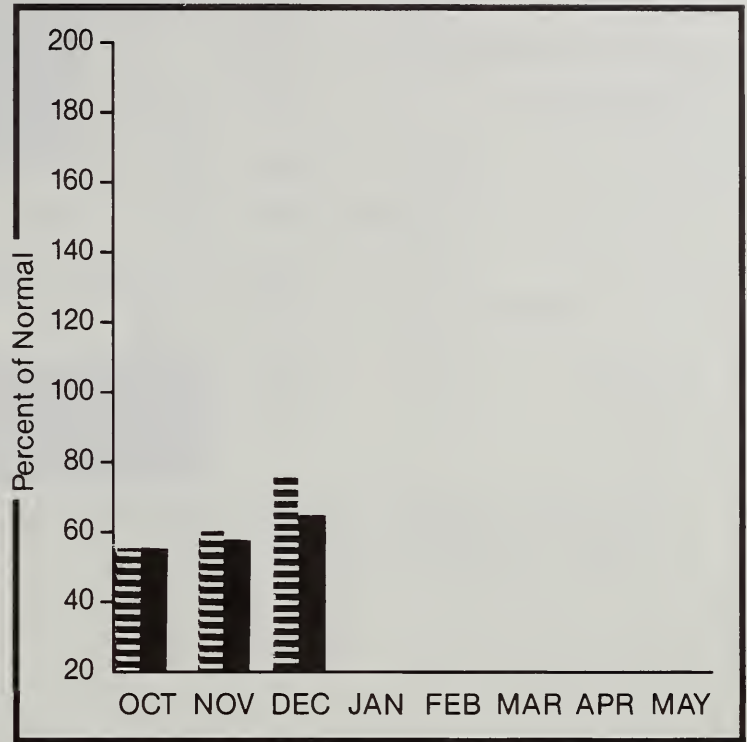
**Mountain snowpack\*** (inches)





\*Based on selected stations

Maximum  Average   
Minimum  Current 

**Precipitation\*** (percent of normal)



\*Based on selected stations

Monthly precipitation  Year to date precipitation 

## WATER SUPPLY OUTLOOK:

Snowpack accumulations supplying water to the Virgin River are about 48% below average for January 1. December precipitation was 75% of average. Water year accumulation was 64% of average. Storage in Lake Mohave was 7% over last year at this time. Lake Mead has 2% more storage this year. Streamflow for the Virgin River near Hurricane, UT is expected to be 90% of average.

For more information contact your local Soil Conservation Service office.

# SOUTHERN NEVADA

## STREAMFLOW FORECASTS

FORECAST POINT	FORECAST PERIOD	25 YR. AVG. (1000AF)	MOST PROBABLE (1000AF)	MOST PROBABLE (% AVG.)	REAS. MAX. (1000AF)	REAS. MAX. (% AVG.)	REAS. MIN. (1000AF)	REAS. MIN. (% AVG.)
VIRGIN RIVER near Hurricane, UT	APR-JUL	62.0	56.0	90	89.0	144	21.0	34
LAKE FOWELL inflow	APR-JUL	8086.0	9500.0	117	13540.0	167	6020.0	74

RESERVOIR STORAGE		(1000AF)			WATERSHED SNOWPACK ANALYSIS			
RESERVOIR	USEABLE CAPACITY	** USEABLE STORAGE **			WATERSHED	NO. COURSES AVG'D	THIS YEAR AS % OF LAST YR. AVERAGE	
		THIS YEAR	LAST YEAR	AVG.				
LAKE MOHAVE	1810.0	1524.0	1422.0	---	VIRGIN Rv. at Littlefield	4	37	42
LAKE MEAD	26159.0	24232.0	23683.0	---	VIRGIN Rv. at Hurricane,	4	37	42

1 - Reas. max. and reas. min. forecasts are for 5% and 95% exceedance levels and also (2) below.

2 - Corrected for upstream diversions or changes in reservoir storage.

The average is computed for the 1961-85 base period.



# SNOW DATA MEASUREMENTS (CONT)

SNOW COURSE	ELEVATION	DATE	SNOW DEPTH	WATER CONTENT	LAST YEAR	AVERAGE 1961-85
-----						
HUMBOLDT RIVER, LOWER						
BIG CREEK CAMPGROUND	6600	1/01/87	---	.0E	--	1.0
BIG CREEK MINE	7600	1/01/87	---	.0E	--	2.1
BIG CREEK SUMMIT	8700	1/01/87	0	.0E	10.2	5.3
BIG CREEK, UPPER	7800	1/01/87	---	.0E	--	2.0
BUCKSKIN, LOWER	6700	1/01/87	0	.0E	--	3.0
BUCKSKIN, UPPER	8200	1/01/87	---	2.9E	--	5.6
GOLCONDA #2	6000	1/01/87	---	.0E	--	3.5
GRANITE PEAK	7800	1/01/87	---	3.8E	--	8.2
LAMANCE CREEK	6000	1/01/87	---	2.3E	10.3	3.5
MARTIN CREEK	6700	1/01/87	---	2.0E	--	3.8
MIDAS	7200	1/01/87	0	.0E	--	1.3
EASTERN NEVADA						
BERRY CREEK	9100	1/01/87	---	11.7S	--	6.4
CENTRAL GREAT BASIN						
MONTGOMERY PASS	7050	1/01/87	0	.0E	--	--
LOWER COLORADO RIVER						



# The Following Organizations Cooperate With The Soil Conservation Service In Snow Survey Work

## STATE

California Cooperative Snow Surveys  
California Department of Parks and Recreation  
California Department of Water Resources  
Colorado River Commission of Nevada  
Idaho Cooperative Snow Surveys  
Nevada Association of Conservation Districts  
Nevada Department of Conservation & Natural Resources  
    Division of Water Resources  
    Nevada State Forester  
    Division of Conservation Districts  
Oregon Cooperative Snow Surveys  
University of Nevada, Desert Research Institute  
Utah Cooperative Snow Surveys

## FEDERAL

Bureau of Reclamation  
Forest Service  
Geological Survey  
Soil Conservation Service  
U.S. District Court - Federal Water Master  
NOAA, National Weather Service

## PRIVATE

Nevada Irrigation District  
Owyhee Project North Board of Control  
Owyhee Project South Board of Control  
Pacific Gas and Electric Company  
Pershing County Water Conservation District  
Sierra Pacific Power Company  
Truckee - Carson Irrigation District  
Walker River Irrigation District  
Washoe County Water Conservancy District

Other organizations and individuals furnish valuable information for the snow survey reports. Their cooperation is gratefully acknowledged.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE  
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